



November 1, 2018

Madam Chair and Members of the Tourism Committee:

My name is Melissa Werkman and I am the Executive Director of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association. We promote responsible mountain biking and work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection through interaction with policy makers, the cycling industry, race promoters, mountain bikers and other trail users.

To that end, we support legislation that promotes safe and reliable transportation on our state's highways and roads and value the importance of allowing motorists the ability to transport their bikes safely.

We support the clarification that would be provided in HB 5100 – a technical change that would exclude a trailer ball, rear mounted bicycle carrier or similar device from being considered a “foreign material that obscures a vehicle registration plate”. Hitch mounted bicycle carriers specifically are a common means of transporting bikes and we feel the law should reflect this common practice.

Numerous members around the state, myself included, have had the recent experience of being pulled over and issued a ticket or warning when using a rear-mounted bike rack to transport their bicycles on their vehicles – whether it was in the upright position or having it down with bikes on it and even if the plate was still clearly visible. We also represent race promoters from events such as the Iceman Cometh Challenge in Traverse City, who have heard from many participants over the past two years who are traveling to their races and reporting that they are being pulled over solely for having these racks and issued tickets, or more often warnings.

If we want to promote Michigan as the “Trail State” and put as much effort as we do into encouraging people to visit our many diverse trail systems, we should make sure that we are attracting, rather than penalizing, those who wish to visit and bring their bicycles along. A clarification of this law would go a long way toward doing that.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. The MMBA appreciates the work done by the committee in working to promote our trails, support trail users and protect the natural resources in our state.

